

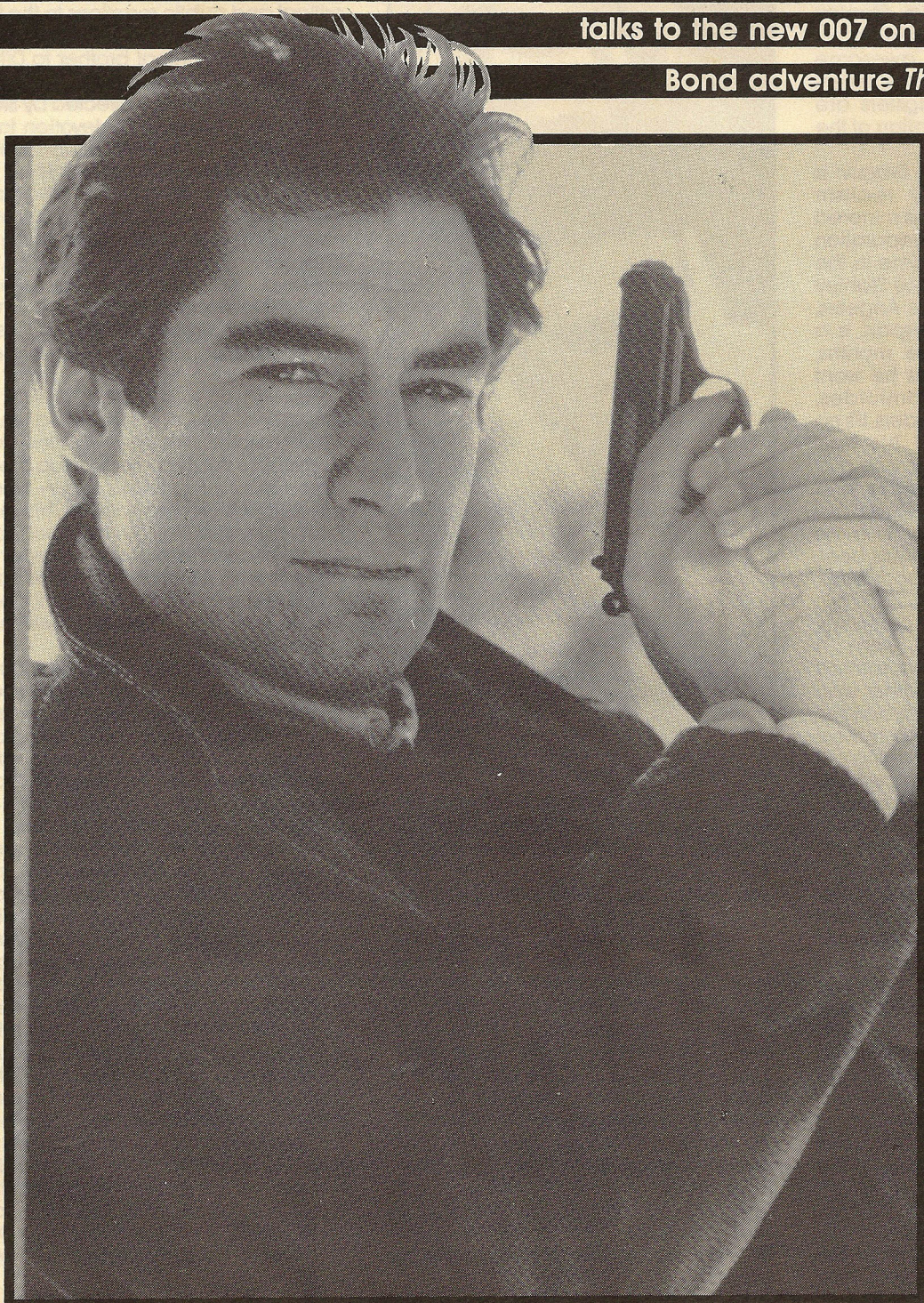
BOND is BACK! 007

Ouarzazate, Morocco — Timothy Dalton, scarf flying, is leaning out of the window of a C-30 transport parked on the runway, and he is spraying AK-47 machine gun fire into raiding rebels, some mounted on horses, others in trucks. Off to the right, a .50 Browning machine gun is chattering away, and to the front and rear mortars are exploding with deafening 'thuds'. A great cloud of black smoke, driven by a chill Atlas Mountains wind, is rolling across the tarmac as men

He's back ... He's Timothy Dalton ... Colin Dangaard

talks to the new 007 on location for the latest

Bond adventure *The Living Daylights* ...



and machines and animals clash in an orgy of action. One horse falls and steps on the face of the rider. The cameras eat it up.

Over at the passenger terminal — the whole building is draped in camouflage — Dolores Smothers of Toledo is tugging anxiously on the sleeve of her husband Chuck. He is a retired accountant. Perhaps, she suggests, Ouarzazate was not a good idea for a vacation stop. Hadn't they been warned about terrorism in the Middle East! Didn't she clip advice from *The Blade* on how to be a travelling American without looking like one! Chuck's jaw has dropped to about the level of the camera hanging from his neck, as he contemplates what appears to be an invasion.

But wait.

There is no panic amongst the passengers, and the crew is acting normally.

In fact, except that an Army of some kind appears to be blowing up the airport, absolutely everything is absolutely normal!

"It's only a movie," explains a passenger.

"Well, I'll be ...," says Dolores.

"That's not just a movie," says a steward. "That's the new James Bond."

The smoke clears and the passengers bus on into town and, back on the set, director John Glen (on his fourth Bond) calls for another take. The ambulance has removed

the injured horseman, everybody has returned to his mark, and the charges have been re-set. "Roll it."

The movie is called *The Living Daylights*, the 15th in a Bond series that has thus far attracted a BILLION people to the box office, with stories and titles mined from the rich literary fields of Ian Fleming. What makes this Bond special is the new lead actor, Tim Dalton, who has taken over the role from Roger Moore, who finally decided he was indeed too old to be leaping over balconies and into beds.

BEAUTY

The story is what you'd expect, an East-West tale of tension that leaps from the Rock of Gibraltar, sweeps through the casbahs of Morocco, along the rooftops of Tangiers across the battlefields of Afghanistan and on to the Italian Alps. Bond drives an Aston Martin DB5, refitted by Q with the latest in defence technology. There is also an Audi 200 Quattro and a silver metallic Audi 200 Avant. The leading lady is the European beauty Maryam d'Abo, and the bad guy is American actor Joe Don Baker, who plays (somewhat timely) a ruthless arms dealer.

While the choice of Dalton, a noted Shakespearean actor, comes as a surprise to movie fans, the reality is that he has been under consideration for some 15 years. As Dalton explains: "When Sean Connery relinquished the role, I was asked if I would be interested in playing it. I said I was absolutely flattered, but that I thought Sean was a tremendous Bond — too good, actually. It would have been the worst move of my life to have taken over then. I could never have played Bond as well as Sean played Bond."

With a shooting cost of \$30 million (US) *The Living Daylights* is the most expensive Bond ever — but producer Michael G. Wilson insists the outlay was necessary to launch an "unknown" like Dalton. "He has what it takes," says Wilson. "But we're also hedging our bet with a great story and non-stop action."

Dalton was selected in a process that Wilson

describes as "not democratic, but not autocratic either", adding: "We discuss it, debate it — Cubby (Albert R. Broccoli) and myself and the director and, this time, Barbara (Broccoli) until we feel right about it. In this particular case, the discussions have gone on many years. "Tim is a tremendous actor and, on stage, a highly respected actor. He has a career that has built up over many years. He comes with a mature view of what being a star means. He is not an overnight success. So we don't have to deal with the kind of bizarre behaviour that comes with the 'overnight' star. This man is down to earth."

This man at the moment is sitting down on an ammunition crate, his legs crossed, his dress that of an Afghan fighter. He has a set, little smile that hides an overbite, and there is about him an athletic alertness. He notices everything.

Born in Colwyn Bay, North Wales, the son of an advertising executive, Dalton's background is absolutely fascinating if you are riveted by 'Macbeth', 'Richard II', 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Anthony and Cleopatra' and 'The Taming of the Shrew'; he has played every character who wore a wig, carried a sword or ate grapes peeled by hand.

CONNERY

"As I was saying," Dalton continues, "I wisely declined the role of Bond when they asked me to take over from Sean. Then, six years ago, they asked me to take over from Roger (Moore). But it was never quite clear, at that time, if Roger was giving up. So I went off and played Flash Gordon. And Roger went on to play another Bond."

Late last spring, producer Broccoli made yet another approach, when it became clear Roger Moore was doing more than his usual pre-negotiation "dance" (as he called it). Even then, it was a near-miss for Dalton. He had commitments that clashed with the Bond schedule. At the last minute his commitments changed and "all the ducks were in a row."

As an interview subject,

Dalton will strike fear in the hearts of reporters seeking something other than this psychological approach to acting. He absolutely refuses to discuss anything that can be even remotely construed as being personal. "I don't see where it is relevant," says the man who drives an old car, has never been married, at age 41, and lives in modest circumstances at locations unknown. He takes roles in television series, or movies, to earn money so he can work on stage, where the pay is little or nothing.

SERIOUS

Does he take James Bond seriously? "You can't make a movie for \$30 million and not be serious. You're talking about a lot of hard work by many people. These movies can be amusing, funny, suspenseful — but they are most certainly always serious. Talk with any comedian and he will tell you being funny is being real serious. The fact that the Bond movies have endured so long is a statement to their quality. And as for my own function . . . you can't not take seriously a work that is your life, your joy, your pride, your . . . everything."

Dalton is chiselled, lean and tanned, not handsome like Roger Moore (so say women) and not with the 'male animal' profile of Sean Connery, but he is a commanding presence nonetheless.

He gives precise answers to precise questions, on:

WORK

Money: "I have been very fortunate in my life. Many years ago I played in something called *A Lion in Winter*, and I have worked ever since. Money from well-paying projects is used to buy time in theatre."

Work: "You can't compare the problems of doing a job you love — in my case, acting — with a job I would hate — which in my case would be working in an office, or a factory."

Women: "I really don't want to get into that. Am I

a sex symbol? I have no idea. I've had no trouble so far. I will deal with what happens, when it happens. No pun intended."

Dalton talks of the "wonderful chemistry" he has with his leading lady, and Maryam d'Abo will later say exactly the same of him. If you believe everything you are told on this set all the intrigue is in the script.

Dalton shifts uneasily on his ammunition crate; he couldn't look more eager to leave if there was a fuse burning at his feet. "How we doing?" he asks. "I mean, any more questions . . . ?"

I ask if he had any fears about taking the job. "It is not," he says, "a question of how good I'll be, but rather a question of whether or not audiences will accept the character of my Bond. That's something you can't predict. This is a great story, a fine movie, but if they don't like me, then we have a huge problem. I want to be bloody good! I have taken over from two men who have been astoundingly successful. Bond has to come through me, otherwise he is not believable . . ."

LAZENBY

Two Bonds? Hasn't he left out George Lazenby, the Australian who played Bond in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*?

"Oh, yes," says Dalton. "If I let his name slip by, it was only because I have sympathy for the man. Nobody tries to fail."

There is another mighty round of explosions. Dalton leaps to his feet like a football fan for a touch-down. "My God," he says, "This is exciting!"

As he is leaving, you ask if there is anything special he has learned from this role. "Yes," he says, "I have learned how to fire a machine gun (which he does with his eyes open; as opposed to Roger Moore who kept his shut) and I have learned how to fall off walls and hang from the Rock of Gibraltar."

And James Bond slips off into the smoke, a videocamera running on his shoulder, to document yet another scene in a home movie that, curiously, will star no Bond at all.